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The Truth about the Railroads. By HOWARD ELLIOTT. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1913. 16 mo, pp. xxii+260. \$1.25.

This book is not a systematic treatment of the present status of the railroads, but is for the most part a collection of addresses, delivered at different places and even on different topics though mainly in defense of the railroads. Almost the same data and arguments, consequently, appear again and again. There is too much repetition and irrelevancy. Mr. Elliott certainly goes beyond the limit of his sphere when he enters into the realm of agricultural history and when he dictates the system of instruction for the development of good citizenship.

The main purpose of the author is to educate the public on the actual facts about railroads and the difficulties they have to labor under, and in these respects he handles the problems quite successfully. He attempts to prove statistically the cheapness and superiority of the railroads in the United States and shows that in spite of the immense service of the railroads in the development of this country in the past and of their great importance in the present, they have been hampered by the state and federal regulations. "The 2-cent maximum fare," Mr. Elliott contends, "is unjust," as it does not enable the railroads even to realize the expense of the passenger trains, the loss being 24 cents per train mile in 1908. It is no wonder that the average net return from railroads scarcely exceeds $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Under such circumstances, it has been almost impossible for railroad companies to get further capital, which is essential for preventing the deterioration of the existing lines as well as for bringing out improvements along with the growing social and economic necessities of the country.

Mr. Elliott bespeaks fair treatment of the railroads at the hand of both the public and the government. Railroads must have as much freedom in the management of their own affairs as any other legitimate business, if they are expected to meet efficiently the growing needs of the country.

The Tyranny of the Country Side. By F. E. GREEN. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1913. 8vo, pp. x+261. 5s.

This volume deals with the darker side of rural England where the condition of the agricultural laborer is shown to be worse than that of the dwellers in the slums of the great cities of that kingdom. The lack of logical treatment and the insufficiency of the statistical data have been compensated for by the local color and personal touch obtained by contact with the actual life in a dozen different counties. Rural housing conditions are wretched. The cottages are often dark and dilapidated and have a very poor water supply. The weekly wages of the peasants are as meager as possible. Though the Board of Trade gave the figure 17s. 6d. as the average for agricultural labor in 1907, the careful

studies of three other authorities find it to vary from 11s. to 14s. in Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, and Gloucestershire. In many cases, a peasant gets only 8s. a week. In spite of these low wages, he is often rackrented.

The worst feature of all is the loss of freedom. "A man must not think for himself in a village. If he does, he invites beggary" (p. 88). "For the ordinary cottager to complain to the landlord, agent, or sanitary authority, is to court immediate eviction" (p. 175). The English agricultural labor is "the worst used and least bold in Europe."

There are different laws and associations for the elevation of the condition of English peasants, such as the Rural Magna Charta of 1894, Housing Act, Small Holding Act, National Land and Home League, etc., but the poor peasant can scarcely take advantage of them. He has not enough capital to start a farm under the Small Holding Act. If he has, he can scarcely make his application reach the proper authority through the intricacies of officialdom. In the case of failure, which is frequent, he is evicted. The very thought of such a fate naturally makes him timid and he bears his miseries silently.

The Land and the Commonwealth. By T. E. MARKS. London: P. S. King & Son, 1913. 8vo, pp. xxv+314. 5s.

The time is quite opportune for the appearance of books on the English land system, and this is only one of the many that have recently passed through the English press. Excepting perhaps the Irish Home Rule Bill, there is today no question of more vital importance to the English public than the land reform scheme of Mr. Lloyd George. Some of Mr. Marks's suggestions as to the reform are quite in harmony with the intentions of the British Chancellor of Exchequer. The author handles the subject ably and interestingly, with opulence of information and mastery of detail.

From an economic consideration of the land system Mr. Marks concludes that the sport and pleasure of landlords are detrimental to the interests of the farmers and the prosperity of the nation. The unmitigated sufferings of agricultural laborers and the unjust and unnecessary restrictions on farmers are the real causes of rural depopulation. The monopoly and oppression of private landlordship obstruct the social and industrial development of rural and urban people alike. The injustice of large private estates and of the present leasehold and rating systems, and the disadvantages of estates held under settlements, trust indentures, and mortgages are discussed in great detail. Almost all the land laws of the past and some of even recent dates have been enacted to secure the interests of landlords; and though the last thirty years have seen numerous parliamentary acts for the protection of rural and urban tenants and for the betterment of their condition, inadequate administration, mostly through interested persons, has not brought full benefit to the persons concerned. The